/390 cont./

361 many huts beside a dead sea monster create the illusion of a village. Since there is plenty of meat and fat, a number of families can settle down together without hindrance. If during this time someone must obtain some vital necessity, he departs for a few days, but leaves his hut standing and occupies it again upon his return. There is no food supply more abundant and convenient than a stranded whale. At the same time the gathering of many
[571] families satisfies the need for sociability, and the people can give themselves up to it all the more undisturbed the longer they are free from worry about the necessities of life. Naturally the large number of people and their freedom from the food quest suggest stimulating diversion, and this is offered principally by the čiexaus and the accompanying kina. In comparison with these protracted events, fewer families gather together for funeral rites, and they remain in one place a much shorter time, often only a day or two.

No matter what brings families together, they always preserve their independence. Groups of relatives and friends erect their huts closer together, but there is always a space of a few steps between them. In spite of intimacy with neighbors, everyone strives for at least a small space between dwellings. The /391/ distribution of huts in such a camp is very irregular, because each individual makes his arrangements for his own greatest convenience. He first selects for his dwelling a dry spot and the protection of a rock or a group of trees. Drinking water must be not too far away. Whoever is first to appear on the scene has a greater freedom of selection, and the stragglers are content to take the places that have been left vacant. No one has a right and would not presume to exercise any kind of influence on the distribution of the huts. A person who wishes to leave the settlement can depart or return unhindered, just as he likes. On such an occasion two or at most three families may share a single hut if they are close to each other, such as brothers and sisters or true friends, but such exceptions are rare. In that case they build the ordinary dome-shaped family-hut in larger proportions, not the so-called winter hut (p. 33).

512 Everyone, of course, is completely free to dispose of his
517 time as he sees fit. The greater part of the day is spent in talk and conversation. During the long evenings they like to recite the old legends and tell of their own experiences. One often sees the men

/391 cont./

572 517 busy making implements, such as the large, bone harpoon points which take a long time. Women and girls devote themselves to their trinkets or weave baskets. Primarily everyone passes the time in uninhibited, protracted inactivity, unless a major enterprise is under way, which requires a definite program for the day.

364 An aggregation of many people for weeks at a time is unavoidably accompanied by considerable uncleanliness around them. In general the Yamana do not have any particular feeling for cleanliness, and in this respect they are more backward than the Selk'nam (Vol. I, 223). The consequences are not very noticeable when a single family stops somewhere for a day and then travels on, but they are different in an encampment of many people. Walking back and forth makes the earth muddy and boggy. Refuse from meals decays and contaminates the surroundings. The air inside the huts becomes increasingly musty and oppressive. True, the cleansing and purifying rain often intercedes, but it does not improve matters much. Giving way before the heaped-up refuse, individual families temporarily depart and relinquish the dwelling and its environs to the purifying influence of natural forces.

We can now understand the brief descriptions by a few European travelers depicting an encampment of many Indians near a stranded whale, the total picture of which evoked unpleasant, even disgusting impressions (49). The way they eat and their

49. In earlier travel accounts there are, unfortunately, no detailed reports about the encampments of many families. This is because there were few occasions for them, and the same is true at the present time.

unkempt appearance are in themselves repulsive. /392/ Over all this hang the thick, heavy fumes of blubber. A person not accustomed to it from childhood is bound to become nauseated (50) if

50. One should recall the work centers of whale fishermen in several places along the Chilean and Argentine coast, which contaminate the air far and wide with unpleasant odors.